

**CITY OF COSTA MESA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

March 24, 2004

The Parks and Recreation Commission of the City of Costa Mesa met in regular session at 6:30 p.m., March 24, 2004, at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, California. The meeting was called to order by Chair Harris followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner Burciaga.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present:

Mark Harris, Chairman
Byron de Arakal, Vice Chairman
Mirna Burciaga, Commissioner
James Fisler, Commissioner
Wendy Leece, Commissioner

Also Present:

William J. Morris, Public Services Director
Steven E. Hayman, Administrative Services Director
Jana M. Ransom, Recreation Manager
Bruce Hartley, Maintenance Services Manager
Raja Sethuraman, Associate Engineer
Claire Flynn, Associate Planner

MINUTES

A motion was made by Vice Chair de Arakal, seconded by Commissioner Fisler, and carried 5 to 0 to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2004 meeting as received.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

John Sanders, principal at Paularino Elementary School, spoke on behalf of volunteer soccer coaches in the Paularino School community requesting the City look into the possibility of allowing the use of the Paularino School fields to three youth soccer teams ages 6 – 10 (approximately 60 children) to hold practices on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, when the fields are not in use by the baseball tee ball leagues.

Martin Millard, indicated he was opposed to Mr. Sanders' request, noting that the Mesa North Community Association was partly created to remove the games at Paularino School, which caused a lot of problems for the neighborhood, including burglaries and adult soccer leagues showing up. Mr. Millard was of the opinion that the banners issue presented to the Planning Commission last Monday should have come to this body for consideration first.

Chair Harris indicated that this Commission was aware of the banners on athletic fields issue going to the Planning Commission. He assured Mr. Millard that banner issues are outside of this Commission's area of responsibility.

CONSENT CALENDAR

**DONATION OF MEMORIAL
TREE AND PLAQUE**

MOTION

A motion was made by Vice Chair de Arakal, seconded by Commissioner Leece, and carried 5 to 0, to accept the donation of a tree and plaque from the Costa Mesa Community Foundation to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Incorporation of the City of Costa Mesa.

PUBLIC HEARING

**TEWINKLE PARK SKATE
PARK DESIGN REVIEW**

Mr. Bill Morris made the presentation and introduced Steve Rose, Landscape Architect and Plan Planner with Purkiss-Rose, RSI.

Mr. Rose indicated that they are very excited about this project because of the fantastic site, which has a lot of the amenities that they like to see when they locate a skate park. He noted that they had the opportunity to work with the local skaters whose lives evolve around skateboarding as well as with youth which provided a great opportunity to address the needs of a lot of the users in the community. Mr. Rose presented the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation of the Concept Plan, which takes into account the existing trees, existing mounding and fits into the site very well. He noted that it is going to be a sunken skate park so it won't be visible from the street, but that it would have good visibility for security reasons. He indicated that part of the program was to develop a drop-off area, a restroom facility and a controlled entry. It will be a fenced facility and lit. He went over all the elements of the skate park.

Responding to a question from Vice Chair de Arakal, Mr. Rose indicate that there will probably be four to six lights, 20 or 30 foot candles within the skate park.

Responding to a question from Chair Harris, Mr. Rose said that the fencing material would be either tubular steel or wrought iron rail.

Mr. Morris continued with his presentation, going over items that were brought up during the community meeting, including parking, lighting, noise and traffic. He noted that the public comment period for the environmental document attached to the staff report would remain open through April 5.

Responding to a question from Chair Harris regarding the Negative Declaration document, Mr. Morris noted that staff felt, in doing due diligence, to further break down this to be able to have all of the potential impacts analyzed so the public could see them and comment on them. He indicated that staff had gone well beyond what any City might do for a specific element within a master planned park.

Responding to a question from Vice Chair de Arakal, Ms. Flynn confirmed that the noise analysis of the different case studies of different existing skate parks does include ambient noise data which is the noise generated from the skate park users as well as ambient traffic noise and other users in the park. She noted that it's the collective noise generated from the park itself, not specifically from skate park users.

Responding to a question from Vice Chair de Arakal, Ms. Flynn indicated that the City's noise ordinance establishes a maximum limit

of 55 decibels for exterior residential noise. She said that the anticipated noise levels for the skate park would be in the range of 42 to 46 at a distance of 700 feet.

In response to a question from Vice Chair de Arakal, Mr. Sethuraman indicated that staff is looking at 76 parking spaces assuming that both, the skate park and the bark park peak at the same time. He noted that that number does not take into consideration parking spaces along Junipero Street and the Tennis Center.

Responding to a question and comments from Vice Chair de Arakal, Mr. Sethuraman indicated that Arlington Drive currently operates at a level of service “A” and that the anticipated 100 vehicle trips on a daily basis to and from the skate park does not come even remotely close to affecting that level of service.

Responding to a question from Vice Chair de Arakal, Ms. Flynn indicated that the lighting plan for the proposed skate park facility would be less intensive in terms of scale and size compared to the Tennis facility, making the lighting impacts minimal.

Vice Chair de Arakal commented that he appreciates how the plan does form to the existing trees and tucks in up closer to Arlington, so that a lot of that open space can remain open.

Rachel Barnes, CM Bark Park Foundation Chairperson, expressed concerns about the safety of skaters, dogs, and the layout of the parking lot, indicating that these are problems that need to be addressed.

Cathy Mitchell, 2601 A Santa Ana Avenue, provided the Commission with pictures of the Bark Park parking lot, indicating that there will be conflicts between skaters and the bark park people.

Pat Bell, 3027 Langs Bay, said that the parking plan is at the expense of the Bark Park. She emphasized that skateboarders and dogs cannot be put together. She provided the Commission with pictures of the Bark Park parking lot, and complained about the existing survey of the existing parking demands for TeWinkle Park, east of Junipero Drive Drive being performed during the absolute slowest time of the year for the Bark Park. She expressed concerns about staff not addressing the garbage/waste truck issue and the fact that the taking away of the parking lot will prevent them from holding their fundraisers.

T. Schmidt, 2265 Santa Ana Avenue, agreed in that skateboarders and dogs don’t go together. She suggested putting skate stoppers to stop skaters from skating near the dogs and causing a commotion.

Lee Elliott, 19934 Vermont, Huntington Beach, expressed concerns about parking and the problem of loading and unloading dogs.

Patricia Allen, Bark Park Foundation treasurer, indicated that she has never seen the Bark Park parking lot less than full, and that during the summer time there may be 5 or 10 spaces left. She noted that putting skateboarders and dogs together is not a good idea. She suggested moving the entry to the skateboard park over off of Junipero instead of through the parking lot to make it safer for everybody, or move it over closer to the tennis courts or somewhere where the two are not in conflict.

Jim Gray, 215 Knox, Costa Mesa, thanked staff and the Commission for getting this far with the skate park. He commented that the design really fits well with the site. He noted that most kids going to skate

parks are dropped off. He indicated that he represents the skate park coalition and that they were willing to work with City officials on any options or ideas.

Paul Schmidt, 2265 Santa Ana, indicated that he does not think that parking is the issue that people fear. He suggested to close the skate park during the times that the Bark Park does their fundraising activities. He indicated that there are plenty of ways to make a peaceful co-existence between the two users. He thanked staff for their support in the skate park project.

Greg Haileg, 2406 Norbound Way, offered a suggestion to alleviate the pressure on the dog park parking lot.

Commissioner Fisler indicated that he empathized with several of the things that the Bark Park people brought up. He said that they have shown some realistic problems that the City needs to address in another conceptual design to solve them.

In response to concerns from Commissioner Fisler and comments from Chair Harris, Mr. Morris reiterated that the existing parking lot lay out does meet the minimum design standards in the City's codes for any type of development.

Responding to a question from Chair Harris, Mr. Morris indicated that staff is planning on relocating the Bark Park trash bins just within the fenced area of the park near what would be the easterly driveway into the Arlington parking lot.

Chair Harris indicated that it would be a good idea and a nice gesture on the City's part to close the skate park for the Bark Park to do their fundraisers.

A discussion ensued regarding the safety of the drop off area, initiated by Chair Harris.

Commissioner Burciaga asked if the leash law regulation was posted at the parking lot, suggesting its enforcement for the safety of the children and the liability of the dog owners.

Vice Chair de Arakal went over why, in his estimation, the parking impacts would be more than adequately handled.

Vice Chair de Arakal thanked Purkiss-Rose for the design work, Claire Flynn for the Environmental Review document, Mr. Morris for championing this project, and City staff for all their hard work. He indicated that it is a really good plan that responds to the needs of the community and the concerns of Mayor Pro Tem Mansoor and Council Member Cowan about parking, open space and restroom facilities. He reiterated how proud he is of the work that the City has done on this plan and indicated that he is looking forward hopefully, to have people using it by this time next year.

Responding to a question from Chair Harris, Mr. Morris indicated that the restrooms would be gender based.

MOTION

A motion was made by Vice Chair de Arakal, seconded by Chair Harris, and carried 5 to 0, to: 1. Approve Concept Plan #2 for construction of a Skate Park at TeWinkle Park, 2. Approve the removal of one existing tree, with the condition that one 24-inch box tree and two 15-gallon trees be planted at the new Skate Park site, 3. Direct staff to proceed with the adoption of the initial study/negative declaration, 4. On the parking lot design, remove the drop-off loading area at the southwest corner, and 5. Consider putting a crosswalk at Juni-

pero and Arlington, if determined it is needed.

BREAK

The Chair called for a break at 8:20 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

**REQUEST OF RESIDENTS
FOR DOG EXERCISE AREA
AT BALEARIC CENTER**

Ms. Jana Ransom made the presentation.

Adele Green, 2853 Boa Vista Drive, Costa Mesa indicated she was disappointed at the staff report not offering alternative solutions to their request. She suggested a removable fence to be put up and removed by volunteers.

Sudhi Sant, 2018 Flaming Drive, Costa Mesa, agreed with Mrs. Green’s idea of a portable fence that could be put up and taken down by volunteers. He reiterated the group’s willingness to work with City staff to accomplish their proposal.

Brian Green, 2853 Boa Vista Drive, Costa Mesa, inquired about the possibility of renting the portion of the facility where they want their dogs to exercise. In regards to liability, he wanted to know what the difference was between the skateboard park and what this group is asking for.

Ms. Ransom indicated that athletic fields are rented for athletic uses and Estancia Park for park uses. She said that State law, with respect to having skateboard facilities within the City, is similar to a ski area that is considered a high-risk activity. She noted that if the City enacts municipal codes requiring equipment and having to do with behavior or decorum, and posts those rules at the sites where those activities are held, the persons who engage in those activities take on the liability upon their own person.

Mr. Green said that he thinks the idea of a removable fence is wonderful. He indicated the group’s willingness to take the liability upon themselves as well as paying more for their dog licenses to go towards liability issues. He noted that the Bark Park is great, but that they would like to have a place closer to their community.

Martha O’Meara, 1980 Lemnos Drive, Costa Mesa, commented that the staff’s report was very thorough and thanked staff. She noted that their request was not for an exclusive group, but for the benefit of the entire community. She said she did not think it was difficult to designate a particular area, and suggested circling off the area they are requesting to use. She indicated the group’s willingness to work out the liability issues.

Greg Prough, 2837 Shantar, Costa Mesa, reiterated his support for this group’s proposal. He suggested the City should consider planning for more dog parks.

Mark Haverland, 3201 Minnesota Avenue, Costa Mesa indicated that the suggestion of putting up a barricade might be something that the City would like to look at as a pilot program. He confirmed the group’s willingness to find ways to satisfy the City’s concerns regarding their request.

Dennis Olsen, 2806 Shantar Drive, Costa Mesa, hoped that the City would agree to a trial period in regards to the portable fence.

Jan Ryan, 2820 Boa Vista Drive, Costa Mesa, reiterated the group's desire to work with City staff to make their proposal happen.

Stan Winterman, 1283 Shantar Drive, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of the group's proposal.

Leslie Hackleman, 2033 Balearic Drive, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of the group's request and thanked the Commission for listening to them.

Commissioner Leece commented on the perseverance and spirit of this group to continue on with their request. She was disappointed that they were not brought into any discussions by City staff. She volunteered to be on a subcommittee to meet with City staff and the residents to continue to pursue the challenges of this request.

Vice Chair de Arakal said that staff was asked to look at this issue from a legal perspective, and that that's what they did. He said he was grateful to Commissioner Leece for her desire to form a committee and wanting to serve as this Commission's liaison. He recommended the formulation of a proposal by this Committee on all the potential implications of having a temporary enclosed area to be brought back to this Commission.

Vice Chair de Arakal advised the Committee to use their time judiciously with staff, since they were close to spending the 4 hours allowed by Council directive in researching this issue.

Commissioner Burciaga agreed with Vice Chair de Arakal's comments, saying that it is good to keep an open mind for other alternatives that in the end could have a better end result not only for this group, but also for the whole community. She encouraged the group to be patient with the process.

Chair Harris noted his concern about turning parks into off leash areas and portable fences, but indicated his willingness to listen to the group's proposal once the Committee meets and works on it.

In response to questions and comments from Chair Harris, Mr. Hayman indicated that staff, regardless of the perception of what they may or may not be spending their time on, tries to take care of the issues and the priorities that are presented to them in each of the departments. He suggested that if this Commission feels that further study and exploration of options are important or even to frame the issue relative to what would be required in changing the master plans or the municipal code, that it is a matter that should be taken to the City Council to see if they will authorize staff to work on the project.

Commissioner Leece confirmed her willingness to work with the residents and City staff. She said that it is great to live in a City that is willing to not close the door on an idea just because it is difficult and time consuming. She commended the group for their enthusiasm and perseverance.

MOTION

A motion was made by Vice Chair de Arakal, seconded by Commissioner Leece, and carried 5 to 0, to direct staff to approach City Council with respect to providing additional staff time and have Commissioner Leece work with the requesting residents to form a

Committee and develop a proposal with staff input to be brought back to this Commission.

OLD BUSINESS

BARBECUES IN CITY PARKS

Mr. Bruce Hartley made the presentation.

Chair Harris noted his concerns about Section 12-20 of the Municipal Code not getting enforced properly and its enforcement being left to the discretion of the Park Rangers. He also noted the problem of not all parks having hot coal receptacles and went over the dangers he sees in that.

Mr. Hartley indicated that right now there are hot coal receptacles only where there is a permanent City barbecue.

Mr. Hartley suggested looking at the modern uses of barbecues in the parks and going through the task of amending the park rules and the municipal code to match actual real uses.

Mr. Morris indicated that the use of propane should not be an issue, and that the use of charcoal in parks that do not have hot coal receptacles should not be allowed and enforced. He indicated that the Public Services and the Administrative Services Department Directors have the ability and have exercised that ability to designate areas within parks for barbecuing on some holidays and heavy weekends. He indicated that it is probably at this point more of an education process with the public. He said that he believes that propane can be allowed in a large number of areas in the parks, but that the real restriction is not to have charcoal in any parks where there is not a receptacle or the ability to get rid of it.

Mr. Morris offered to verbally report back to this Commission on staff's follow up on this issue.

MOTION

A motion was made by Chair Harris, seconded by Commissioner Leece, and carried 5 to 0, to: 1) Allow charcoal barbecues where there are hot coal containers, 2) Allow propane barbecues in designated areas and review signage, and 3) Educate and inform the public through the City's newsletter and signage on the proper use of barbecues in the parks.

CEMENT CREW

Mr. Bill Morris made the presentation.

Responding to comments and questions from Commissioner Leece, Mr. Morris indicated that all Cities struggle with this issue as well as with trip and fall claims. He noted that the survey attached to the staff report shows that cities handle permanent repairs in different ways. Mr. Morris indicated that staff certainly looked to other cities to see if there are any innovative techniques that they might be using. He noted that City Engineers and Public Work Directors meet monthly to talk about issues like this one that are of common interest.

Chair Harris went over his reasons for bringing this issue forward, noting his belief that residents deserve a quicker response to repair concrete sidewalks and curb and gutter. He noted that a concrete crew could be cross-trained in other areas, and that he was tired of

seeing sidewalks and roads in need of repair in the City.

Commissioner Fisler agreed with Chair Harris in that the response time for repairs should be shorter. He indicated that he was not in favor of expanding City government jobs, worrying that a cement crew could get expensive citing benefits, extra holidays, etc.

Vice Chair de Arakal indicated that he appreciated Chair Harris’ initiative in bringing the concrete crew concept before the Commission. He said that he understands the customer service orientation of this proposal and the need to respond to people’s needs in a timely manner. He noted that this doesn’t work looking at it from a benefits costs analysis, and that he personally feels uncomfortable formally recommending City Council to look at this right now given the budget situation wherein the City is trying to figure out where to generate revenues and cut costs.

Commissioner Leece agreed with Commissioner Fisler in not adding more to government when this could be done less expensively in the private sector. She also indicated that she would like to see repairs made in a timely manner.

Chair Harris made a motion to recommend that City Council give future consideration of alternative means of repairing concrete sidewalks and curb and gutter, including considering an in house cement crew.

Vice Chair de Arakal seconded the motion for discussion. After some clarification/discussion in regards to the motion as to how it would be presented to City Council, Vice Chair de Arakal withdrew his motion.

MOTION

A motion was made by Vice Chair de Arakal, seconded by Commissioner Leece, and carried 4 to 1, with Commissioner Burciaga voting no, to receive and file the Cement Crew report.

RECREATION MANAGER’S REPORT

Ms. Ransom presented the Commission with a power point presentation on the Mobile Recreation Program, Mobile Skate Program and the Field Ambassadors Program.

She went over the purposes of the programs, as follows:

Mobile Recreation Program – bring programs to places in the City where there are no parks. Supports local efforts to provide kids with activities that enrich their lives and use their leisure time in a positive way.

Mobile Skate Program – provides skaters in the community a fun, safe and legal place to skate. Insures a positive environment with high quality equipment. Provides equipment to kids who don’t have it so that they learn to use what is appropriate. Staff encourages appropriate use of the City’s public facilities by teaching kids that they can come out and use this program and not have to use picnic benches and other inappropriate pieces of equipment. This program participates with the Police Department in their National Night Out program.

Field Ambassadors Program – Administers field reservations and

schedules to educate user groups on the Joint Use Agreement and Field Allocation Policy. This program’s mission is education vs. enforcement and provides an opportunity for discussion between groups so that they can cooperate with each other so they are mindful of the community. Field Ambassadors ensure that fields are not ill used, that groups on the fields are permitted and that they are left in good condition.

Ms. Ransom also reported on Adult Softball Leagues, Spring Instructional Classes, Spring Day Camp, and the Youth Basketball program. She made mention of the following upcoming events: Torelli’s Egg-Citement on April 10 at Tanager Park, Earth Day at Fairview Park on April 18, and A Day in the Park at Fairview on April 24. She invited the Commission and members of the community to the CostaMazing “Dining through the Decades” event on Friday, June 25th.

**MAINTENANCE SERVICES
MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mr. Hartley presented the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation updating them on the following projects: Renovations at the Boys and Girls Club of the Harbor Area, installation of a small picnic area at Jordan Park, completion of Marina View Park lighting project, underway construction of the Community Garden, the Arbor Day Tree Planting, a cooperative effort between the City and ReLeaf Costa Mesa, and a final follow up on the most recent phase on the Costa Mesa Senior Center landscaping.

**PARKS PROJECTS
MANAGERS REPORT**

Mr. Morris reported that staff is working on a possible design contract for what would be area “E” at Fairview Park which is the remaining 34 car parking lot on the west side of Placentia near the existing entry way into the park. He indicated that staff is also working on the multipurpose trail and hopes to get CALTRANS approval of that, as well as the bridge to go over Placentia Avenue to connect the multipurpose trail on both sides of Placentia Avenue. He indicated that staff has targeted this Commission’s May meeting to look at two to three different concepts of bridges involving different types of materials and aesthetic looks to try and get a Commission recommendation and approval on a certain design. He reported that staff continues to work with the Army Corps of Engineers since it looks feasible for them to give the City a significant amount of money as mitigation for their clearing the Santa Ana River of the existing vegetation. He indicated the possibility of applying that money towards the riparian area on the low land area of Fairview Park. He also reported that staff is working with the LA Airport in providing some funding to the City for some mitigation on runway expansion work.

**COMMISSIONERS
COMMENTS**

Commissioner Leece requested an updated Field Users Average Monthly Field Use report.

Commissioner Fisler invited the community to the following activities to take place at Fairview Park: Earth Day on Sunday, April 18, at 9:00 a.m. and Wild Flower Walk on April 3rd at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Burciaga thanked staff for working so hard. She encouraged the community to read the Skate Park negative declaration. She indicated that she would like City Council to consider keeping the Mobile Skate Park, complemented the work of the Field Ambassadors and thanked staff for working on the new Community Garden and the Senior Center.

Vice Chair de Arakal, referring to the skate park, congratulated the City and said he is proud of this Commission. He thanked City staff for their hard work and City Council for their vision in putting the skate park in the TeWinkle Park Master Plan.

He commented on what he sees as a disturbing trend that seems to be going on in this City with respect to youth and youth sports in the community. Regarding budget considerations, he said it is bothersome to him that it seems like there is an inordinate share of recreation programs being scrutinized for potential cutting.

He commented on how he sees this rising attitude that the fields are over used and complaints of disproportionate impacts, indicating it is ironic to him that the voters in this City won't pass a transient occupancy tax increase in order to bring in more revenue, survey the City and identify and purchase some park land. He said he supports youth and sports activities and would not support any kind of reduction in permitting of fields. He indicated that the City should start contemplating some real revenue solutions if it is serious about managing its growth.

Chair Harris indicated that he had attended the opening ceremonies for the American Little League and inquired about the possibility of putting permanent restrooms at that site.

Chair Harris thanked the four Planning Commissioners who approved the use of Banners on Athletic Fields, noting he was glad about it. He agreed with Vice Chair de Arakal's comments regarding identifying revenue sources to purchase land to build sports complexes or to re-look at areas like Fairview Park on the east side by the train area. He reiterated his support for kids and youth sports programs.

Chair Harris indicated he is very happy about seeing the skate park project moving along after all these years. He said it's going to be wonderful seeing all the kids enjoying it. He shared he couldn't wait for the dedication ceremony.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 p.m. to the Study Session on Wednesday, April 28, 2004 at 5:15 p.m. in Conference Room 1A, followed by the regular Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Submitted by:

William J. Morris
Public Services Director